

Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS
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CHURCH BODY SUES

At last a church body has found the courage to challenge in the courts an infringement by an American Legion post of a Negro's right to occupy a hotel room without racial discrimination. Before the Congregational Christian Churches adjourned the Omaha meeting of their General Council, the council authorized its executive committee to file suit against the local post of the American Legion for discrimination against a Negro delegate. The Legion post, said to have the largest membership of any in the country, owns a clubhouse and had advertised rooms for rent. The General Council, which has around 1,500 delegates and probably attracts 3,000 or more persons to its biennial meetings, taxed the hotel facilities of Omaha to their limit. So the local committee assigned some delegates to the American Legion club. One of the assignees was A. Langston Gordon, a Chicagoan who happens to belong to the Legion and who is also a Negro. The club accepted the assignment, including that of Mr. Gordon. Then when he arrived its agent refused to permit this one man to occupy its accommodations. Other delegates carried the issue to the top officials of the Legion post, and they sustained the decision of their employee, maintaining in spite of their public advertisement of accommodations for travelers that theirs was a private club for whites only. Omaha officials and the county attorney refused to take action against the club, taking refuge behind the club's alleged private status. But the General Council, including its new moderator, George D. Hastings of Grant, Nebraska, took a very serious view of the matter, as many church bodies are rightly coming to do. Conventions of most denominations and interchurch organizations no longer go to cities which practice any form of racial discrimination in the treatment of delegates. Congregational Christian delegates not only authorized a court action but contributed \$500 toward the expenses of the suit.

(*The Christian Century*, July 11)

THEY GET TOGETHER

A merger of the Mid-South Synod, white, and the Blue Ridge, Negro Synod of the Presbyterian Church, USA, is expected to be completed by 1957, it was announced . . . last week by the Rev. C. A. Edington of Asheville, (N. C.)

Rev. Mr. Edington, who is a member of the joint study committee, said each synod met in Chattanooga, Tenn. earlier in the year with officials of the church from Atlanta and approved the merger. He added that the committee recommended the merger to the two synods.

"We are now on the verge of final merger with the full approval of the synods expected to put the union into effect by 1957. . . .

Following the meeting in Chattanooga, each synod was expected to vote on the merger. Rev. Mr. Edington said he understood Mid-South, meeting earlier in Tennessee, had already approved the merger. Blue Ridge Synod will meet in Birmingham in October and is expected to approve the merger. . . .

(*Norfolk Journal & Guide*, July 7)

A long step toward integration was taken in the Methodist Church when delegates from nine Midwest states at their Quadriennial Conference opened the ranks of the North Central Conference of the church to Negro Methodist congregations and church bodies.

The conference set up a special committee to meet with representatives of any church in the Central Jurisdiction which wants to consider integration.

This action implemented a policy adopted by the recent general conference of the church which declared that "There must be no place in the Methodist Church for racial discrimination."

The North Central group extended a "cordial and fraternal" welcome to all churches and conferences within the Central Jurisdiction.

It also urged strengthening of conference boards on world peace and advocated legislation to ban advertising of liquor in interstate commerce and to prohibit sale or use of liquor on airlines.

(*Norfolk Journal & Guide*, July 21)

White and Negro clergy alliances (in Little Rock, Ark.) have merged to form the Greater Little Rock Ministerial Association.

Thirty Negro ministers of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance approved the proposed constitution and by-laws of the new organization. The white alliance previously had taken similar action.

The two groups will meet together for the first time July 16 to elect officers. Under the transition plan adopted both alliances will dissolve September 24 when the new association begins to function.

(*Religious News Service*, July 6)

STATEMENT RE THE ELECTION

Six prominent church and synagogue leaders called on the voting public . . . to "reject political arguments based on racial or religious prejudices." . . .

The plea was issued jointly by the Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, president of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.; the Most Rev. Edwin V. O'Hara, Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kansas City, Mo.; Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman, president of the Synagogue Council of America; Mrs. Mildred McAfee Horton, chairman of the Division of Christian Life and Work of the National Council of Churches; George N. Shuster, president of Hunter College, and Irving M. Engel, president of the American Jewish Committee/ . . .

This proposal . . . will be forwarded to Leonard W. Hall and Paul M. Butler, national chairmen of the Republican and Democratic parties, respectively. They will be asked to circulate copies of the entire statement to state chairmen and district party workers.

The text of the statement follows:

"With the free world looking to American democracy for leadership and inspiration in the struggle against totalitarianism, all eyes are focused on our election campaign.

"Nothing is healthier for self-government than outspoken political discussion, but nothing is more harmful to a self-governing people than confusion of the issues by base appeals to racial and religious bigotry.

"In the light of the pre-eminent role which the United States is playing, it is incumbent upon us to prove that in our democracy men of all races, creeds and national origins participate in our Government, to take all necessary measures to prevent any expression of racial or religious bias by their adherents and to condemn publicly and emphatically every occurrence thereof.

"We urge all citizens to reject political arguments based on racial or religious prejudices and to rebuke those who make such appeals.

"We suggest that in every community a nonpartisan and nonsectarian committee undertake to keep a watchful eye on campaign activities and call to the attention of political leaders any instances of appeals based on religious or racial prejudice. Let us make certain that our election campaigns are in every sense free and worthy of a nation founded on the principles of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God."

(*New York Times*, July 29)

GOING ON IN MISSISSIPPI

White superintendents in several Mississippi and Louisiana communities have banned *Life*, *Time* and *Look* from the schools because of their "antisouthern attitudes." . . . Segregationist leaders are attempting to inspire boycotts against "any national corporations which contribute to the N.A.A.C.P." or "sponsor radio programs which seem to favor integration." . . . A columnist on a Jackson, Miss., newspaper reported recently that Mississippians' protests forced the U. S. Steel Corp. to abandon a contemplated television story on the Till murder case. In the same city, an editor announced (in rebuttal to the N.A.A.C.P.) that "God is not concerned with the troubles of human beings." And one white citizens' council advertises half a dozen ministers among its prosegregation speakers. . . . A complaint lodged with the Mississippi public service commission asks that party telephone lines be segregated. . . .

The regional council of Negro leadership gave its "Man of the Year" award to Gus Courts, who moved away from Belzoni, Miss., where he had been shot at after urging Negroes to register to vote. A posthumous citation went to George W. Lee, minister who was killed in Belzoni after he had urged Negroes to register. . . . To Winthrop Rockefeller's warning to Arkansas businessmen that "industry will stay away from areas of racial strife," Mississippi segregationists retorted that integration is "too high a price to pay for new industries."

(*The Christian Century*, June 27)

MISSISSIPPI BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Mississippi's State Sovereignty Commission, "watch-dog" of states' rights, voted . . . to hire secret agents to serve as "eyes and ears" in the fight to keep segregation.

The twelve-member commission voted also to spend state money to "buy information" about activities in the integration camp.

In another move, the commission hired a full-time publicity director to explain to integrationists Mississippi's position concerning segregation.

The action was part of what Gov. J. P. Coleman, commission chairman, called an attempt "to bring this commission into its full effect and fruition."

The commission was set up by the 1956 Legislature to prevent Federal "encroachment" upon states' rights, with the segregation question as the main objective.

In debating the issue of hiring undercover agents, the Sovereignty Commission agreed upon secrecy because, among other reasons, "it's possible we may want to hire a Negro" to spy upon Negro activities within Mississippi.

Mr. Coleman called attention to the use of informants by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and said the commission would operate in the same manner. He called the investigators and informants, known but to the commission, "an official arm of state government."

The Governor cautioned the commission against panic.

"I see no reason for alarm, frustration or futility," he said. "We have the ball and it's up to the opposition to take the initiative."

"After all, integration came about because the people gave up. We will not give up."

(*New York Times*, May 16)

NAACP FINED

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was fined \$10,000 for contempt of court July 25 (in Alabama). The fine will be increased to \$100,000 unless the organization produces certain records within five days.

Circuit Judge Walter B. Jones levied the fine after the N.A.A.C.P. had refused to produce records to be used to determine whether an injunction against its continued activity in Alabama should be lifted. When it declined to do so, the judge placed the organization in "willful contempt."

The records include membership lists, names of persons authorized to solicit members and funds, bank and property data and copies of charters.

Under the court's written order, the N.A.A.C.P. can request that the fine be reduced or set aside if it produces the records within the prescribed time. If it refuses to comply, the fine automatically increases to \$100,000.

The judge, reaffirming an order he issued two weeks ago, said the records must be produced. But the organization clung to the contention that it could not legally be compelled to bring them into court. Its lawyers indicated they intended to appeal to Federal Court.

(*New York Times*, July 25)

HOSPITAL BIAS

Detroit

A study committee reported . . . that it had found widespread evidence of discrimination against Negroes in the use of hospital facilities in metropolitan Detroit.

The report, growing out of a four-and-one-half-year survey, also asserted that Negroes in Detroit did not have equal opportunities for either medical or nursing training and practice.

The thirty-five member committee, appointed by the city's Commission on Community Relations, was headed by the Right Rev. Richard S. Emrich, bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Michigan. The survey included a study of the experiences of Negroes in forty-seven hospitals, nine nursing schools, two medical colleges and two nursing colleges.

The report said that most hospitals and training institutions professed a policy of non-discrimination but that only a few were found to put this policy into practice. No institution was named.

"The interest of this committee," the report stated, "is not in finding any single institution guilty of a practice of racial restriction or exclusion. Rather the committee seeks to suggest those policies and methods by which democratic practices may prevail and community needs may be met."

The report outlined nineteen recommendations aimed at eliminating racial restrictions. . . .

Among the findings of the study were the following:

Of the forty-seven hospitals, forty-three reported one or more Negro patients admitted. Thirteen said Negroes were rarely admitted. Four reported no Negro admissions. Twenty reported hospital segregation and twenty-seven integration in bed assignment.

Forty-three of the hospitals indicated that their staff appointments were open to qualified doctors regardless of race. But only twenty-three had Negro doctors on their staffs.

Thirty-seven hospitals reported the employment of Negro nursing personnel. But only 10 per cent of the professional nurses at the hospitals were Negroes.

While all Detroit area hospitals with medical teaching programs reported that they were open to all qualified applicants regardless of race, only four of the seventeen hospitals approved by the American Medical Association for training of internes had admitted Negro graduates of accredited medical schools.

Racial restrictions were not found in either the policy or record of medical schools surveyed. Relatively few Negroes have applied.

One nursing college said it admitted Negroes but the other reported that as a matter of policy and practice Negroes were excluded.

(*New York Times*, June 24)

Chicago

Discrimination on admissions by private hospitals in Chicago limits facilities for Negro babies, Augustine Bowe, chairman of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations asserted (recently).

Mr. Bowe said his statement was based on the commission's report of the Negro birth rate in Chicago in 1955. The report disclosed that 62 per cent of Negro babies were born in public hospitals where maternity wards were least equipped.

"Private hospitals either do not admit Negro mothers, do not allow Negro physicians on the staff, or have a low ratio of the number of Negroes admitted," Mr. Bowe said.

The City Council recently approved an ordinance forbidding discrimination in hospitals. That might help solve the unfair situation, Mr. Bowe said.

According to the report, Negro births are confined to a few hospitals. These have only 12 per cent of the bassinets in the city. Forty Chicago hospitals, with 64 per cent of the bassinets delivered only 2 per cent of Negro babies born in hospitals during the year, the report stated.

(*New York Times*, July 22)

TALLAHASSEE NEGOTIATIONS HALTED

All efforts to settle the Negro bus boycott were dropped by the Tallahassee City Commission (on July 12).

"It's been proved to me that all they want is integration and they'll never get it as long as I'm on the City Commission," said H. C. Summitt in a statement endorsed by a Commission majority.

All five commissioners joined in a declaration that there will be no more boycott negotiations with the Negroes "under any circumstances."

Mayor Fred Winterle indicated there is a possibility that the City will make a formal protest to the State Board of Control about the boycott leadership assumed by some members of the faculty of Florida A. & M. University for Negroes.

The State Board of Control determines policies of A. & M. and other State universities.

The Rev. M. G. Miles, director of student activities at A. & M. presided last night at a mass meeting of the Negro Intercivic Council, which has spearheaded the boycott. At the meeting the Negroes took up a collection to finance the car pools that have provided them with transportation.

They also reaffirmed their determination to hold out for fully integrated seating on buses. Their refusal to ride the buses led to the suspension of service July 1, but the Cities Transit Company has since announced plans to resume operations over routes serving white neighborhoods.

(*Louisville Courier-Journal*, July 12)

HOUSING RESEARCH

Twenty-four research projects seeking data on such unanswered questions as extent of the market for housing among minority groups, types of housing and neighborhoods desired by such groups, the effect of minority group occupancy on property values and the character of race relations in mixed residential areas have been undertaken in thirteen cities by the Commission on Race and Housing with a \$235,000 grant from the Fund for the Republic.

A major aim of the Commission in undertaking the studies is to discover ways in which federal agencies, private builders, community organizations and financial institutions may cooperate to provide adequate private housing for minority groups which have suffered from discrimination practices.

The projects are giving special attention to the housing difficulties of four distinct minority groups: Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Americans of Asian origin and Americans of Mexican background.

Cities in which data are being collected are Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., San Francisco, Oakland, Atlanta, Birmingham, Norfolk, Houston, San Antonio, Toledo, Los Angeles, Detroit and New York.

(*NAIRO Reporter*, June, 1956)

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OUSTED

The all-white board of trustees of the South Carolina State College for Negroes has confirmed the charge by Rep. Powell (D.-N. Y.) that students and faculty members have been dismissed because of their opposition to the White Citizens' Council.

All of the trustees are members of the Citizens' Council according to Powell.

He said the trustees had notified 25 students and six faculty members that they could not return to the college in the fall. But W. C. Bethea, secretary of the board, said the ouster orders affected 15 students and "several" faculty members. He said the students were notified after the end of the school term, so "they were not expelled."

Those ousted were suspected of being leaders of the campus boycott against companies whose owners are active in the Citizens' Council.

Shortly after Easter, students at the college also staged a short strike to protest surveillance of the campus by state police under orders from Gov. Timmerman.

"The board is not going to put up with any such insurrections," Bethea said. "The NAACP is just trying to goad us into closing the school so they'll have an excuse to seek entrance at our white colleges."

He said that a legislative investigation of NAACP activities on the campus would begin "soon." . . .

(*New York Post*, June 26)

CHARLOTTESVILLE SCHOOLS MAY DESEGREGATE

Charlottesville (Va.) must begin desegregating its public schools by September 1956, Federal Judge John Paul ruled after severely criticizing the State of Virginia for its efforts to evade the U. S. Supreme Court school desegregation decision.

Judge Paul said he would issue a decree ordering Charlottesville to cease using race or color as a basis for assigning pupils to public schools. He asked attorneys for the state and the NAACP to prepare such an order.

The school board, represented by J. Lindsay Almond and former Gov. John S. Battle, spent nearly an hour presenting its defense: that school boards are agencies of the state and cannot be sued without the state's consent.

Judge Paul, early in the hearing, dismissed as "without merit" the state's contention that no legal action can be taken against school boards without the state's consent. The state had offered this defense in other similar suits in Arlington, Norfolk and Newport News. . . .

Judge Paul took Gov. Stanley to task for his statement that he would "do everything within his legal power to prevent desegregation of public schools in the state."

"I am not willing for this court to be a knowing accessory to a program which has as its purpose to delay the implementation of the high court decision."

"There must be no discrimination based on race or color. I appreciate the difficulties facing the school board and have no intention of trying to restrict them in any valid regulation they may have, but, I repeat, there must be no discrimination because of race or color."

The Federal jurist concluded, "Have I made myself clear, gentlemen?"

(*Afro-American*, July 21)

MINISTER RESIGNS

The Rev. Clayton Brooks Hale, minister of the Second Church in Boston (Unitarian) has submitted his resignation because of what he termed opposition to his plan to appoint a Negro as his assistant.

Members of the church's standing committee said . . . they declined to accept the resignation. The committee appointed a committee to study the matter and confer with the minister.

Dr. Hale submitted the resignation to be effective July 31, 1956.

He said his proposal to appoint a Negro to assist him as minister to students had brought "resignation threats" and "harsh" words.

The standing committee, however, backed the appointment proposal by a vote of 10-3.

Dr. Hale said that after the "strong" opposition developed he went to his summer home at Freedom, Me., to meditate and eventually decided not to appoint the Negro, but to submit his resignation.

"That I misjudged my people," he said, "has become too obvious to ignore for it is not easy to lose one's friends no matter how justifiable may seem the cause."

(*New York Post*, June 26)

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"I think it would be well for the gentlemen loudest in their advocacy of continued segregation, contrary to the supreme court and the district courts, to ask themselves whether or not they are really acting as genuine Americans, or whether they are doing the work of those striving to introduce the principles of atheism and infidelity and the principles of communism into the United States."—Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel, *New Orleans, Louisiana*.

"In this political summer, the temptation will be great on every level to exploit with greater venom and viciousness the courts as the scapegoat and villain of these times. The bar, as I see it, can render no greater service than to identify such exploitation as the demagoguery that it is and marshal its prestige to arrest this flood of hysteria before it sweeps away the foundations of the very law we are pledged to uphold. No decision of the Supreme Court which has evoked attack or denunciation is beyond the reach of the people to set aside through orderly procedure, if a majority so desires. It is the very fact that a majority might not desire to overturn the court that causes no effort to be made to submit the issue to the people."—Everett L. Looney, *Austin attorney and former president of the Texas Bar Association*.

"There is nothing complicated about what we want. We just want the same things other Americans want — the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities."—*A Negro teacher quoted in Look Magazine*.

"As soon as the white Southerners begin to realize that the Negro has a new status and that they have to deal with him as an equal individual, the whole problem of desegregation will be much easier for everyone. I think that if this approach is made, the question of whether desegregation is going to take place in a month or a year will be unimportant, because at that point the people in the community, Negro

and white, will together decide what is best for them."—*Robert E. Carter, assistant counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund*.

"By no means of reasoning can we arrive at the conclusion that the South can by any plan of intervention, evasion or pure defiance, nullify the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court."—*L. P. McLendon, state educational and legal leader in North Carolina*.

"It was only after study and much concern for the welfare of the youth of our state that the North Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc., came to the conclusion that the inherent rights of all children to be educated could be served only through preserving the public schools. Our organization is dedicated to this task. We believe that it is the responsibility of the governor of North Carolina and the members of the General Assembly to furnish the guidance and the methods by which this can be accomplished. Our public schools must be maintained."—*The Executive Board of the North Carolina Parent-Teacher Association*.

(Taken from *NEW SOUTH*, June, 1956, published by Southern Regional Council)

BOOK REVIEW

Naught for your Comfort

by

Trevor Huddleston

Price \$3.75

Out of twelve years of first-hand experience as an Anglican priest in the midst of some of the most oppressive conditions of racial discrimination and segregation, Trevor Huddleston speaks to the church and the world society which thus far has turned an almost indifferent ear to this situation.

The book is an impressionistic report complete with poignant illustrative stories. Historical insights are provided and rather careful analysis of certain socio-economic and social psychological factors are part of Huddleston's manner of opening the windows to South Africa for the reader.

The author's experiences in South Africa seem to have built a pressure within him which could only be released through the writing of this book. He is not satisfied when it is completed for the situation still remains, 'naught for anyone's comfort.' (By A. S. K.)

The matter is these pages is presented for the reader's information. Unless so stated, it is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes or positions of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations or of The National Council of Churches.

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